

**To:** Beauvais, Joel[Beauvais.Joel@epa.gov]; Distefano, Nichole[DiStefano.Nichole@epa.gov]; Fritz, Matthew[Fritz.Matthew@epa.gov]; Rupp, Mark[Rupp.Mark@epa.gov]; Burke, Thomas[Burke.Thomas@epa.gov]  
**From:** Enck, Judith  
**Sent:** Thur 5/12/2016 1:09:06 PM  
**Subject:** POFA/POFS : see 2 Congressional requests from NY

## **Schumer asks EPA to resolve Newburgh water crisis**

**May 11, 2016**

### **Mid-HusonNews.com**

NEWBURGH – As the issues of whether Newburgh's Washington Lake water supply is contaminated enough to hurt people, where the chemicals are coming from and how do you stop them from entering the lake continue to remain unclear, US Senator Charles Schumer is asking the federal EPA to become actively involved in the situation.

State and federal agencies are working to resolve the problem, but Schumer told Mid-Hudson News on Wednesday he would like the federal environmental agency to take an active role.

"I have asked the EPA to come in and help them clean up their water, to give them advice and then there are federal programs that can help," he said on Wednesday.

City Manager Michael Ciaravino also released a letter he sent to regional EPA Administrator Judith Enck on May 2 asking for EPA to issue its revised health advisory for the chemical PFOS, one of the two found in the lake. At present, studies say the lake has 140 to 180 parts per trillion of PFOS while the danger threshold is 200 ppt. But, he said the Dutch government has set a permissible threshold of 65 ppt.

Ciaravino said it is believed that the EPA is going to issue a new health advisory with new PFOS levels below 200 ppt.

For now, he said the city "must take emergency action to reduce, or, if possible, to eliminate this contamination from our water system." That comes at a time when he said recent testing says a potential source of the chemicals is discharging over 700 ppt.

As a precaution for now, the city is using its backup resource, Brown's Pond for water, but once that supply is depleted, it will have to purchase water from the New York City aqueduct, but that could cost over \$200,000 per month. One alternative, Ciaravino said, could be for Newburgh to drill wells into the aquifers and secure water for its residents in that way.

## **Gibson Calls For Investigation Into Drinking Water Contamination**

May 11, 2016

Time Warner Cable News

Rep. Chris Gibson called on Wednesday for an investigation into the state and federal government's response to the contamination of drinking water in the upstate communities of Hoosick Falls and Petersburg.

The state ultimately was able to provide a new filtration system as they seek to also identify new potential sources of drinking water following tests that showed high levels of the chemical PFOA.

Manufacturing plants in the area, including Saint-Gobain, are believed to be the source of the contamination.

But Gibson, who retires at the end of the year, believes the cause of the contamination, as well as the responses from the state and federal agencies tasked with overseeing clean drinking water, needs to be assessed.

"This situation has continued to evolve and, in some ways, worsen over the past year," Gibson wrote in a letter this week to Rep. Jason Chaffetz, the Utah Republican who chairs the House's Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

"Although there have been actions taken to address these problems, many of my constituents are deeply concerned with potential ongoing health risks to their families, delayed and confused responses by the state and federal agencies involved, and lack of accountability to find out what happened and why it was allowed to go on after the initial detection of the contamination of their water supply."

The letter comes after the Democratic-led Assembly initially planned to hold hearings on water contamination issues around the state, but ultimately declined to after the passage of the budget in March.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo earlier this year announced the formation of a task force of state officials that would respond to drinking water

"Clean water is our precious natural resource—essential for our economy, precious to our environment and essential for our health," she said. "I applaud Congressman Gibson's call for federal hearings on the crisis in Hoosick Falls," she said. "Big corporations and powerful insiders have warped the laws that should protect our communities and shut out the voices of the people whose health and livelihood are at stake."

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## **Rep. Gibson Calls for Investigation into Hoosick Falls Water Contamination**

By TWC News Web Staff

Thursday, May 12, 2016

Time Warner News – Capital Region

Congressman Chris Gibson is asking the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform to investigate the PFOA contamination of drinking water in Hoosick Falls and Petersburg.

Gibson says he is concerned about the "delayed and confused responses by the state and federal agencies involved, and lack of accountability."

He also wants them to investigate why people were allowed to continue drinking the water after PFOA was detected. Gibson said:

"Critical questions regarding the actions of the federal Environmental Protection Agency, New York State Department of Health, and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation remain unanswered. Regrettably, the New York Legislature has changed course and now will not conduct oversight hearings on what went wrong and why, after stating they would be holding hearings on the matter."

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### **Gibson: Congress should probe PFOA crisis: U.S. Rep Chris Gibson wants investigation of state and federal PFOA response**

By Kenneth C. Crowe II

Updated 11:01 pm, Wednesday, May 11, 2016

Albany Times Union

U.S. Rep Chris Gibson has requested a congressional investigation of the state and federal response to the PFOA contamination of water supplies in Hoosick, Hoosick Falls and Petersburg similar to hearings held earlier this year on Flint Michigan's water crisis.

Gibson, R-Kinderhook, wrote House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah, Tuesday to request the committee investigation.

This committee questioned Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder in March in Washington, D.C.,

about the lead contamination of Flint's municipal water supply and the government's role in the crisis.

Gibson released his letter to Chaffetz Wednesday noting, "Regrettably, the New York Legislature has changed course and now will not conduct oversight hearings on what went wrong and why, after stating they would be holding hearings on the matter."

In his letter, Gibson links the Flint and Capital Region water crises asserting it's "critically important" to have transparency in state and federal responses to water emergencies. Gibson represents the communities with PFOA contamination.

Residents in the rural towns and village of eastern Rensselaer County criticized the response by the state Department of Environmental Conservation, state Health Department and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to the PFOA crisis.

PFOA, the acronym for perfluorooctanoic acid, is a chemical used to manufacture non-stick surfaces and in other processes. Considered to be carcinogenic, it was found in public and private water systems in the towns of Hoosick and Petersburg and the village of Hoosick Falls.

The contamination is said to have emanated from the Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics plant in Hoosick Falls and the Taconic facility in Petersburg. The state declared a state Superfund site in Hoosick Falls.

"Although there have been actions taken to address these problems, many of my constituents are deeply concerned with potential ongoing health risks to their families, delayed and confused responses by the state and federal agencies involved, and lack of accountability to find out what happened and why it was allowed to go on after the initial detection of the contamination of their water supply," Gibson wrote in the letter.

"It is this last component regarding accountability that I am referring to the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, Critical questions regarding the actions of the federal Environmental Protection Agency, New York State Department of Health, and New York State Department of Environmental Conservation remain unanswered," Gibson said.

The press offices for Gov. Andrew Cuomo, the state Senate and Assembly did not respond to requests for comment.

Zephyr Teachout, a Democratic candidate running to succeed Gibson, said in a statement, "I applaud Congressman Gibson's call for federal hearings on the crisis in Hoosick Falls. Big corporations and powerful insiders have warped the laws that should protect our communities and shut out the voices of the people whose health and livelihood are at stake."

[kcrowe@timesunion.com](mailto:kcrowe@timesunion.com) - 518-454-5084 - @KennethCrowe

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## **Water Contamination Questions Remain Among Hoosick Falls Residents**

By Katie Eastman

Tuesday, May 10, 2016 at 11:06 PM EDT

Time Warner News – Capital Region

It can be rugged at times. There are times when the words don't match what we see.

"I was diagnosed in November of 2011 with ulcerative colitis," Jed Donovan said.

All Donovan ever saw was nature, like a hummingbird, yet Hoosick Falls had a secret in the water.

"A chemical that you can't see or smell, that we assumed was safe to drink," he said.

It's that ugly truth that's taken so much from this pretty place, and Donovan wants some of it back. He's one of the main plaintiffs in a class action lawsuit against the companies believed to have contaminated the water with the chemical PFOA.

"And I drank the water like a boatload," Donovan said.

Everyone did.

Even with a temporary filtration system, there are still so many questions about what the people in Hoosick Falls can't see. From allegations the mayor worked too closely with Saint Gobain, the company the DEC says is responsible for the contamination, to worries about pool water that the department of health says is safe.

All of these things are reasons why Donovan signed up for the lawsuit.

"I don't know really what to hope for," he said.

Maybe he'll see something in return for the thing he never saw coming.

Many have taken blood tests through the Department of Health in order to find out how much PFOA is still in their blood streams. Individuals will be learning their results soon, but the DOH couldn't give TWC News an exact deadline.

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## **Water testing for chemicals expands to Amherst**

By MICHAEL CASEY

May 11, 2016

Finger Lakes Times

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — New Hampshire officials announced Wednesday that they are expanding the investigation of a potentially cancer-causing chemical in the state's drinking water to a former manufacturing site in Amherst.

The New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services said 11 well test results there show concentrations of the chemical PFOA, used in Teflon coating, up to 620 parts per trillion. Four tested at over 100 parts per trillion. The Environmental Protection Agency's advisory sets a limit of 400 parts per trillion for short-term exposure.

The manufacturing company, Textiles Coated International, operated in Amherst from 1985-2006 and made films for use in industries including composite molding, chemical processing, heat sealing and welding. The company, a manufacturer of high-performance plastics, also has a plant in Manchester that started in 2005 but the state said that it had not identified any private wells within a mile radius of that plant. The company discontinued using PFOA in 2014.

The environmental services department has advised residents near wells that are affected not to drink the water. They said bottled water will be provided.

In a statement, Textiles Coated International said it is "fully committed to health, safety, and environmental compliance" and will work with the state "to fix the problem."

Amherst is just the latest Northeast community to learn that PFOA has contaminated its drinking water.

Until now, all of the contamination has been linked to several current and former plants run by Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics. It was found in wells near the company's plant in Merrimack, near a now-shuttered plant in North Bennington, Vermont, as well as in the Hoosick Falls, New York, water supply, where the company has two plants.

After learning of the contamination in New York, New Hampshire officials began testing wells within a mile of the Saint-Gobain plant. So far, at least 52 private wells, most of them in Litchfield, have shown elevated levels of PFOA. Residents of roughly 400 homes affected by PFOA contamination may need to drink bottled water all summer.

Saint-Gobain has agreed to pay for efforts to design a possible extension of public water service for the impacted wells around its New Hampshire plant.

The Saint-Gobain revelations also prompted the state environmental services department to start looking across New Hampshire for plants that have used PFOA.

Last week, it released a list of more than 40 companies that were possible past or present users of PFOA. The list includes two Textiles Coated International sites.

In Vermont, more than 100 private water wells in and around the North Bennington area have been found with levels of PFOA as high as nearly 3,000 parts per trillion. Vermont has set an advisory level of 20 parts per trillion of PFOA in drinking water. The contamination has prompted a group Bennington County residents to file a class-action lawsuit against Saint-Gobain over what it says was the company's negligence in the handling and disposal of PFOA. They are seeking \$5 million in damages for property value losses and general inconvenience.

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## **Hoosick Falls water bills not reimbursed yet, mayor defends conflict of interest questions**

By: WNYT Staff

Posted at: 05/10/2016 5:50 PM/ Updated at: 05/11/2016 12:35 AM

WNYT TV

HOOSICK FALLS - People packed into a Hoosick Falls Board of Trustees meeting to hear PFOA updates, Tuesday evening. The temporary carbon filtration system works, but people are still wondering whether they should have known about PFOA sooner.

Mayor David Borge addressed a Times Union article citing dozens of obtained emails showing Borge and Saint Gobain worked closely together during this contamination issue.

"Did Saint Gobain cause you to tailor your message here?," asked Asa Stackel. "No, not at all. as i said earlier, i shared one letter that went out to the public with them because there was specific time frames and different things Saint Gobain was volunteering to do," said Borge.

The mayor also acknowledged Saint Gobain is paying for Hoosick Falls to use a law firm and communications agency. Even though the law firm could be negotiating against Saint Gobain's interests.

"There's no conflict there, this is getting the job done, and that's what our folks have been able to do," said Borge.

Residents still haven't received promised reimbursement checks for six months of water bills on water they couldn't drink. The state told us they hoped to send the up to 240 thousand dollars to the village two weeks ago.

The village says it hasn't received the money yet.

As for swimming pools containing PFOA, the DEC and state health department say it's safe to swim. Even though the advice was to keep showers short in PFOA water.

All in all, the mayor says the village's reaction to this PFOA crisis has been swift.

"I'm getting phone calls from different states, okay, across the country, as well as different communities in New York State, saying to me, "how did you get it so fast?"

The board also accepted bids to put in a 1.5 million dollar permanent carbon filtration system. A representative from the state health department says blood testing results should be back soon.

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### **Hoosick Falls, N.Y. residents will wait for water bill refunds: Mayor says state hasn't distributed money, state says talks ongoing with polluters**

By Edward Damon

Posted: 05/11/2016 07:14:52 PM EDT

Bennington Banner

HOOSICK FALLS, NY — Residents who were told for months not to drink contaminated tap water will have to wait for a refund on their bills.

The municipality has not received \$240,000 Gov. Andrew Cuomo promised two months ago, according to Village Mayor David Borge, meaning the municipality can't reimburse water users.

"We can't give out what we don't have," Borge said during Tuesday's Village Board meeting.

And while state health officials say there's no health risk from PFOA in pool water, residents aren't so sure.

Refunds were among several announcements Cuomo made March 13 in his first trip to the village since the EPA issued a no-drink order in November. The governor's office stated each water user would be refunded half of their bills, representing a total of \$240,000.

"I've spoken with representatives from the governor's office and we're working out details (on refunds)," Borge said.



Funding for rebates is one piece of a consent order with two companies potentially responsible for contaminating water with PFOA, or perfluorooctanoic acid, a spokesperson for the governor's office said Wednesday. Officials are "working aggressively with the parties," he said, and hope to have a signed agreement soon. It's unclear how many months customers will be reimbursed and whether the refunds will be for the full amount or half. Predecessors of both Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics and Honeywell International used PFOA, a chemical involved with making the nonstick coating Teflon, in various village factories for decades, according to the state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). In January, the DEC declared Saint-Gobain's McCaffrey Street plant as a state Superfund. In February, the agency demanded both companies enter legally binding consent orders to make them reimburse the state for costs already incurred for the response and a full clean-up. The federal EPA has its own investigation and could declare the village a federal Superfund site.

Attorneys for the village are also negotiating with the companies. Borge said he fully expects the village to be fully reimbursed for costs of hiring attorneys, communications specialists and engineers.

It will take about 30 days for the village to issue refund checks once the state distributes the funds, Borge said. In the meantime, "people need to continue to pay their bills." Borge said income from water and sewer fees is down because residents were only drinking and cooking with bottled water for four months.

"That's a loss to the community that residents should not have to take on," Borge said, noting the need for maintenance on the water distribution system and repair to 11 fire hydrants.

Swimming pools and hot tubs were also subjects of frustration at the well-attended meeting.

Lloyd Wilson with the state Department of Health said water from several pools was tested. All contained PFOA below the federal advisory level of 400 parts per trillion (ppt). A toxicologist evaluated the risk, he said, and concluded there is no health issue associated with water in swimming pools and hot tubs.

"The word is go out and enjoy the pools," he said.

Jim Quinn with the DEC said his agency already has guidelines for chlorinated pool water, which could kill microorganisms in the environment. He said if owners drain their pool, water should be directed into a sanitary sewer, not a storm drain, so it enters a wastewater treatment plant, or pumped into a tanker truck.

A DOH fact sheet on pools and hot tubs was issued this week and is on the village website. Both men said there were no plans for testing more pool water.

Resident Silvia Potter expressed concern over swimming in water containing PFOA, noting the EPA recommended people avoid long showers and other exposure via skin. She questioned how much chlorine would be left when pools are uncovered this spring and said she was concerned over young children who may swallow pool water containing PFOA.

Wilson said the most concerning exposure is by drinking and called dermal absorption "basically non-existent."

Resident Kevin Allard remarked there's a certain level of mistrust from residents towards health officials given that "in December, you told people it was safe to drink."

Borge, thanking Quinn and Wilson, asked they tell their supervisors the proposed plan for pools and hot tubs does not go far enough and more concrete actions are required.

Contact Edward Damon at 413-770-6979

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